(c) These market access issues are highlighted in appropriate bilateral forums like India-EU Joint Commission, meetings of Sub Commissions and also in the bilateral sectoral working group meetings. During the recently concluded India-Eu Business Summit held in Copenhagen in October, 2002, EU has been requested to take an overall view on bilateral trade matters keeping the long-term perspective.

Import of sensitive items

1203. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the import of 300 sensitive items being monitored by his Ministry declined by 3.72 per cent in April, 2002 to Rs. 688 crore as against Rs. 714 crore in the corresponding month last year;

(b) if so, the main reasons for the same; and

(c) the steps proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Decline had been mainly due to decrease in the imports of fruits and vegetables, edible oil and cotton and silk products. Imports of all items, including the import of the 300 sensitive items, are subject to market forces within the parameters of the Exim Policy. A marginal decline in the imports of the 300 sensitive items does not call for any intervention by the Government.

Trade gap

1204. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:
SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the value of exports and imports during the first half of the current financial year and the trade gap;

(b) the details of comparison with the same period of 1999-2000 and 2000-2001; and

(c) the measures taken by Government to reduce the trade gap?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) As per the data available from Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Kolkata, the value of merchandise exports, imports and trade balance for the first half of 2002-03, 2001-02, 2000-01 and 1999-2000 are given as under:

(Value in US $ Million)

Years (April-Sept.)	Exports	Imports	Trade Balance
1999-2000	17461.4	22474.3	-5012.88
2001-01	21385.7	25469	-4083.31
2001-02	21123.9	25982.5	-4858.6
2002-03(P)	23974.3	28277.4	-4303.11

(P): Provisional Figures

(c) The trade gap in 2002-03 (April-September) has actually fallen as compared to the corresponding period in 2001-02. The export growth rate of 13.5% in the first half of the year is above the target of 12%. Export promotion being a constant endeavour, various initiatives have been taken by the Government to boost exports of merchandise goods and to reduce the trade gap. The EXIM Policy for 2002-07 incorporates a number of measures to proactively promote exports. Some of the major initiatives undertaken by the Government to boost exports of merchandise goods include launching the scheme of Assistance to States for Infrastructure Development for Exports, strengthening of Market Access Initiative, establishing Agri-Export Zones, incorporating additional features and facilities for Special Economic Zones, launching of "Focus Africa" Programme, etc. Besides these, a Medium Term Export Strategy 2002-07 which was announced this year, has identified 220 Focus Products and 25 Focus Markets to achieve 1% share in world exports by 2006-07.

Development of hydrogen car

1205. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether is a fact that India and USA are implementing projects for developing hydrogen car;

(b) if so, the details of the projects;